



Middle School Writing Guide



Recommended Instructional Practices
and Resources



Basic Language Knowledge

Parts of Speech

NOUN

A **noun** is a word which is the name of a person, place, thing, or idea.

It may be a:

- **proper** – the name of a specific person, place, thing, or idea.
Ex: President Lincoln gave a speech in Gettysburg in November, 1863.
- **common** – it does not name a specific person, place, thing, or idea.
Ex: The boys mowed the lawn before leaving for the rodeo with their friends.

PRONOUN

A **pronoun** is a word used in place of a noun. Pronouns may be singular or plural – He is going. They are going.

It may be a(n):

- **personal pronoun** (I, you, he, she, we, they, me, myself, us, etc.)
- **possessive pronoun** (my, mine, your, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs, etc.)
- **indefinite pronoun** (all, both, nothing, anything, etc.)

VERB

A **verb** is a word which expresses action or existence.

It may be:

- **present, past, or future tense** (eats, ate, will eat)
- **helping** (will go) or **linking** (is, am, are, was, were, seems, appears, etc.)
- **action** (dashed)
- **irregular** (sing, sang, sung)
- **active voice** (The boy kicked the ball.) or **passive voice** (The ball was kicked by the boy.)

ADJECTIVE

An **adjective** is a word used to describe a noun or pronoun. Adjectives usually tell which one, what kind, or how many.

It may be:

- **common** (It's a beautiful sunset.) or **proper** (I love Mexican food.)
- **comparative** (That pizza tastes better than the one we had last night.) or **superlative** (That pizza is the best I have ever eaten.)

ADVERB

An adverb modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.

- Adverbs answer the following questions about the words they modify:
How: telling how something is done or viewed (carefully, well, fast, loudly, quickly).
When: telling when, how often, how long (tomorrow, never, often).
Where: telling where, to where or from where (here, there, beyond).
To What Extent: telling how little, how much (little, totally, entirely, scarcely).

PREPOSITION

A **preposition** is a word that shows how two words or ideas are related to each other and shows the relationship between its object and some other word in the sentence (under, in, at, up, on, outside, within, till, over, with).

A **prepositional phrase** includes the preposition, the object of the preposition, and the modifiers of the object. (It's wise to swim within sight of the lifeguard.)

CONJUNCTION

A **conjunction** is a word that connects words or groups of words.

It may be:

- **coordinating** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) -- FANBOYS
- **subordinating** (although, even though, since, while, if, because, when, after/before, etc.)

INTERJECTION

An **interjection** is a word or short phrase included in a sentence in order to communicate strong emotion or surprise. An exclamation point is usually used to separate an interjection from the rest of the sentence. (Wow! Help! Whatever!)

Types of Sentences

Types of Sentences:

1. Declarative (a statement): John took my baseball.
2. Interrogative (a question): Who took my baseball?
3. Exclamatory (shows strong emotion): Wow! The Yankees just won the World Series!
4. Imperative (a command): Give me your ticket.

Sentence Structures:

- **Simple (SS)**: One complete thought made up of a subject (noun) and a Predicate (verb)
Another name for simple sentence is an independent clause (I).

Formula: Subject + Predicate = SS

Example: Robert kicks the ball.

- **Compound (CD)**: Two independent clauses (I) joined with either a comma and coordinating conjunction or semicolon

Formulas: I + comma + conjunction + I = CD

OR I + semicolon + I = CD

Examples: Robert kicks the ball, and Mary throws the Frisbee.

OR Robert kicks the ball; Mary throws the Frisbee.

- **Complex (CX)**: One independent clause (I) and one or more dependent clauses (D)

Formulas: I + D = CX

OR D + comma + I = CX

Examples: I ate a sandwich because I was hungry.

OR Because I was hungry, I ate a sandwich.

The Writing Process

PREWRITING – *THINK ABOUT IT*

- Consider your audience and your purpose
- Brainstorm word lists, thoughts, and ideas
- Picture the idea in your mind and write what you see
- Gather information
- Use a graphic organizer

DRAFTING – *WRITE IT DOWN*

- Don't worry about being perfect – just get the ideas into sentences and paragraphs.
- Select ideas to use and develop them
- Sequence information or story
- Begin drafting

REVISING – *MAKE IT BETTER*

- Read what you wrote
- Consider others' opinions
- Rearrange words or ideas - Add, delete or move parts
- Change ideas to improve on clarity or understanding
- Complete unfinished or unclear thoughts
- Replace overused, unclear, or boring cliché words with better word choices

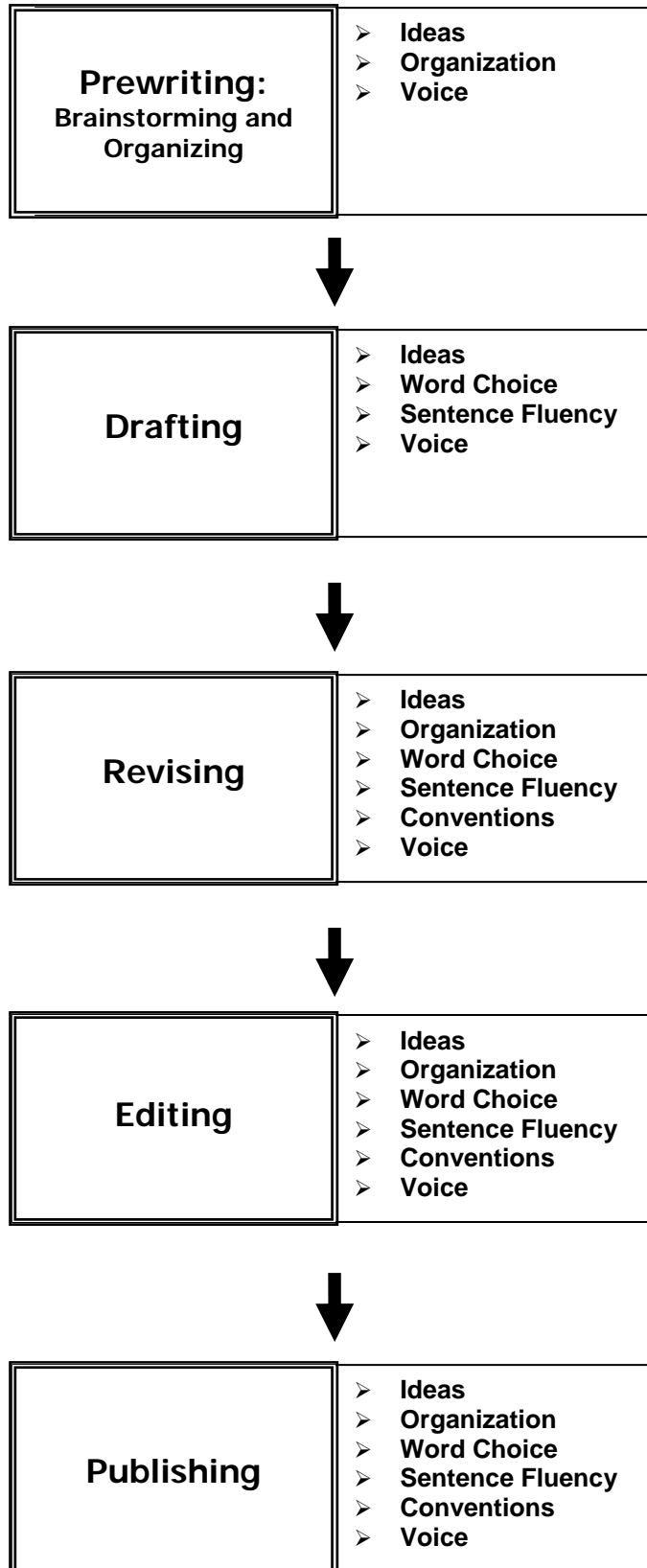
EDITING – *MAKE IT CORRECT*

- Check for spelling, and circle words you're uncertain about. (Then use your dictionary and thesaurus.)
- Check capitalization and punctuation
- Check for consistent verb tense

PUBLISHING – *FINAL COPY*

- Rewrite or type your paper in proper form with all of the changes
- Don't forget the title
- Indent paragraphs
- DON'T skip lines

Correlation between Six Traits + 1 and the Writing Process



Basic Components of an Essay

- The introduction paragraph should include a thesis statement, assertion, or controlling idea with brief overview of your topic.
 - What exactly is the main idea of my essay? Does the introduction state this?
- Each body paragraph should include a specific point with support (or text evidence) and an explanation of your logic.
 - How many main points do I have – are these sufficient to adequately cover my subject?
 - What supporting points (information) do I have for each main point?
 - Are my main points understandable (have I used examples, comparisons to clarify)?
 - Are my main points believable – have I proved the case with statistics or personal experience, or textual evidence (for literary response or research)?
- The conclusion paragraph should connect everything together, but don't restate your thesis.
 - Does my conclusion cover the main ideas? Did I make my position clear?

General Layout Guidelines

Typed Work:

- Double Spaced
- Five spaces to begin paragraph (or tab button)
- Do not skip lines or make a space between paragraphs (JUST INDENT!)
- The standard choice is Times New Roman 12 pt. font size. Always ask your teacher if you can change the font.

Written Work:

- Heading at top (Name, Date, Class Period)
- Don't forget to TITLE your work
- Remember to write legibly. We must be able to read your work.

Transitions

Often it is helpful to have a transition word or phrase at the beginning of a paragraph or at the end of the one before it. This helps you move smoothly and naturally from one idea to the next.

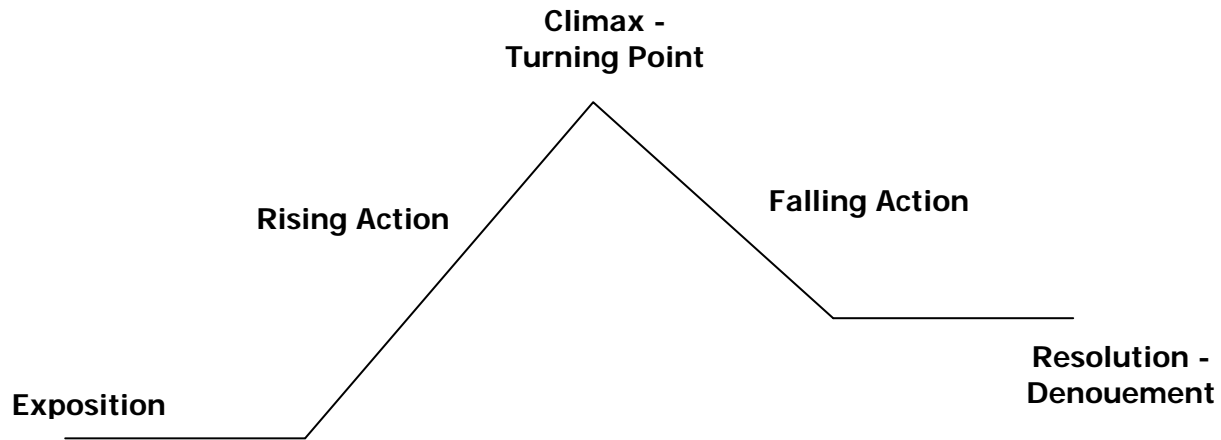
Here are some common transitions/phrases:

- Time: First, Next, Soon, At the same time, As soon as, Finally, Meanwhile, Afterward
- Place: Beside, Near, Above, Below, On the Left, Around,
- Importance: First, Second, Third, Primarily, Above all, Last but not least
- Cause/Effect: Therefore, As a result, For that reason, consequently, Because, since
- Comparison: Similarly, In the same way, Clearly, Moreover
- Contrast: However, Yet, Although, Even though, In contrast, On the other hand, Nevertheless, Conversely,
- Examples: For example, In other words, For instance,
- Adding Information: Also, Additionally, In Addition, Furthermore, Moreover,

Literary Writing

Narratives

A narrative tells a story. It is usually told from one character's point of view. There is usually a chronological series of events (though sometimes flashbacks or foreshadowing is used). Often times these events follow a standard plot diagram shown below:



In addition to the characters, the author must create a setting (both the physical place and the place in time). It should have a lead that gets the reader involved in the story and a conclusion that is not dead or too sudden (in other words, it makes the story feel finished).

Story telling is fun, and the most important thing is to make your story interesting to the people who will read it. In other words, you're not just listing events. You're showing the character's feelings, thoughts, and dialogue that surrounded the events.

Poetry

Poetry is a type of literature in which ideas and feelings are expressed in compact, imaginative, and musical language. Poets arrange words in ways intended to touch reader's senses, emotions, and minds. Most poems are written in lines, which may contain regular patterns of rhyme and rhythm. These lines may be grouped in stanzas.

The general characteristics of poetry may include:

- Figurative language: simile, metaphor, personification, idiom, hyperbole, etc.
- Sound devices: rhyme, rhythm (meter), repetition (i.e. alliteration), onomatopoeia, etc.
- Form: free verse, blank verse, etc.
- Imagery: sensory details

Examples of various poetic forms:

- Haiku
- Narrative
- Quatrain and Cinquain
- Limerick
- Ballad
- Sonnet
- Lyric
- Ode

Expository Writing

The purpose of expository writing is to give the audience information. Expository essays inform, explain, clarify, and define.

Expository writing includes: letters, emails, newsletters, definitions, instructions, guidebooks, catalogs, newspaper or magazine articles, resumé's, pamphlets, reports, and research papers.

A couple of examples of expository assignments:

- Write a literary critique examining the various themes found in Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars*.
- Describe the cause and effects of pollution in the environment. Narrow your topic to one form of pollution, such as something that causes air, water, or land pollution.

A couple of examples of thesis statements for expository essays:

- The culture and history of America significantly reflect the traditions and customs of the many generations that have settled within our society.
- The characters of Billy and his grandfather in Wilson Rawl's novel *Where the Red Fern Grows* depict the importance of family ties through challenges and conflict.

Tips and Tricks for Expository Writing:

- Don't express an opinion
- Consider your purpose when organizing – definition, compare and contrast, cause and effect, process analysis, etc.
- Include specific evidence and examples

Literary Analysis

The purpose of literary analysis is to respond to and examine ideas within a text or a variety of texts. To analyze means to break down the text into parts for greater examination. Analysis moves beyond summary, description, or narration.

Tips and Tricks for Literary Analysis:

- Remember: You are **not** writing a summary or simply describing the plot.
- Ask questions that will make your reader reflect upon certain portions of the text.
- Identify, develop, and organize the argument and the reasoning behind the argument.
- Prove that what you have said is true.
- Collect textual evidence and record the page number.

Procedural Writing

Procedural text is nonfiction reading material. The intent of these written works is to inform or explain something to the audience. This mode of writing is often referred to as a “How-To” paper.

Procedural writing includes: recipes, instructional guides, project plans, directions and manuals.

A couple of examples of procedural assignments:

- Explain the process used to construct a model of a plant or animal cell.
- Explain the process of baking a birthday cake.

A couple of examples of thesis statements for procedural essays:

- To create your own website, you need to follow a five-step process that includes: planning and designing, creating content, testing, reviewing, and finally publishing and promoting your website.
- Though building an ant farm might seem like a basic task, failure to follow the steps properly may result in disastrous consequences for your science fair project.

Tips and Tricks for Procedural Writing:

- No matter how informal the writing, make sure to follow all grammatical and punctuation rules.
- Make sure to consider the format and structure for each specific type of procedural writing.
- Don't assume that any step in the procedural writing is obvious. Explain every detail.

Persuasive Writing

The purpose of persuasive writing, or argument, is to convince your audience to agree with your position. Persuasive essays provide logical and emotional reasons that support a specific opinion to a specific audience.

Persuasive writing includes: speeches, letters to the editor, editorials, advertisements, award nominations, pamphlets, petitions, and other opinion pieces.

A couple of examples of persuasive assignments:

- Write a letter to your congressman telling him why you think summer vacation should be extended by two weeks.
- Write a speech to be delivered to the school board to convince them to require or not require school uniforms.

A couple of examples of thesis statements for persuasive essays:

- Children need access to video games in order to escape the stress of daily life.
- While medical research on animals may have benefits, they do not outweigh the suffering and torture these animals must experience.

Modes of Persuasion:

- Loaded language: words or phrases chosen in place of facts to appeal to the emotions of the reader
- Bandwagon: words or phrases chosen to make the reader believe that “everyone is doing it, buying it, or believing it.”
- Testimonials: allowing well-known people or satisfied customers to promote the product or idea.

Tips and Tricks for Persuasive Writing:

- Establish an appropriate tone – your reader needs to believe that you are rational and logical.
- Consider the arguments your opponent would make – this proves that you are rational *and* allows you to effectively defend against them.
- Clearly state the reasons that your position is correct – one good way to organize is to use each reason as the topic sentence of a paragraph.
- Provide clear, specific evidence to support each reason, and find reliable sources that agree with you and be sure to cite them.

Leads/Intros/Hooks/Grabbers

DEFINITION: A lead/intro/hook/or grabber is the first few lines or paragraph of your writing. It should get the reader's attention focused, clue them in to what you will be writing about, be unique and interesting, and make them want to read more.

The Top 10:

- 1. Dialogue:** Quotes from the characters in the story put the reader immediately into the action.
Example: "What if I'm not the hero? What if I'm the bad guy?" (Meyer, Stephenie. *Twilight*. Little Brown Publishers, 2005.)
- 2. Thought-provoking Question:** Asking a question to get the reader's attention focused on a topic. DO NOT use the "Have you ever... well I have..." lead.
Example: Do you swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth? (Avi. *Nothing But The Truth*. Avon, 1991.)
- 3. Assertion:** Explain how you feel about the issue you are going to discuss in your story.
Example: Mountain biking is more enjoyable than going to the mall or playing video games.
- 4. Shocking Statement:** Something that catches the reader off-guard.
Example: Spiderman is going to be our substitute teacher tomorrow!
- 5. Sensory Details:** Use the five senses to make the reader feel like they're inside the story.
Example: As I stumbled into the kitchen, the smell of home-made cookies made my mouth water and I thought, "Mmm...my favorite."
- 6. Magic 3:** A series of three related ideas
Example: As I sat there looking into her beautiful brown eyes, I thought to myself, "What if my hair is messed up? What if there's food between my teeth? What if I say something stupid?"
- 7. Specific Details for Effect:** Show don't tell
Example: As I stepped out onto the stage, my heart was beating a thousand miles a minute, my palms were sweaty, my pulse was racing, and my hands trembled.
- 8. Humorous Statement:** A clever comment
Example: Normally when Andy Pearce plays the drums, it sounds like a traffic accident between several large vehicles travelling at high speeds in opposite directions. (Klass, David. *You Don't Know Me: A Novel*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2001.)
- 9. Philosophical Statement:** An insightful comment
Example: Sometimes in life you find that even adults make mistakes.
- 10. Mystery Statement:** A statement that arouses curiosity
Example: Five minutes before she died, Grace Cahill changed her will. (Riordan, Rick. *The Maze of Bones*. Scholastic, 2008.)

Other Ways to introduce:

Onomatopoeia:

Example: **Plop!** Jeremy dropped his pet frog into the pool, and all the girls screamed in unison!

Middle of Action:

Example: The spaghetti bowl crashed to the ground in a million pieces, and my family sat silently looking at it... then they turned to me...

Famous Quote:

Example: "The opposite of love is not hate but indifference." (Elie Wiesel) I realized the truth of this quote when...

Idiom:

Example: "You're barking up the wrong tree," my grandma insisted, as I begged her for a fourth helping of her delicious apple pie.

Narrowed Topic:

Example: I rubbed the brown raised bumps of the football as we got set to begin our first game of the season.

The past in the present:

Example: It's April 10th, 1912 and the Titanic is about to set sail from England to America on its maiden voyage.

Full circle conclusion:

Start with the ending

Repetition Devices:

Example: Soap, Soap, Soap, Don't forget the soap!

Flashback:

Example: "Are you alright, Mr. Frank?" (Goodrich, Frances. *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Dramatist Play Service, Inc., 1986.)

Do NOT use these leads:

- Have you ever... well I have...
- One day...
- Once upon a time...
- Hello, my name is...
- My story is about...
- I am going to tell you about...

Conclusions

The last paragraph of your writing is your final chance to make a good impression. The conclusion can make or break your writing. The paper should “feel” complete and leave the reader satisfied.

The Top Ten:

1. **Full Circle Conclusion:** Echoing a word, phrase, quote, etc. from the introduction in the conclusion paragraph. This allows the writing to be cohesive and makes the paper feel finished.
2. **Surprise or Unique Twist:**
Example: And it turned out the tortoise and the hare became best friends.
3. **Philosophical Statement:** Show your reader how your story connects to life in general.
Example: Sometimes in life, it's not how many times you fall, but how many times you get back up.
4. **What you've learned:** Show the reader the lesson that you learned from the experiences in your story.
Example: Thus, I learned that it's not a good idea to stuff 30 marbles in your mouth.
5. **Dialogue:**
Example: “That’s right,” the doctor remarked, “marbles are not good for your health.”
6. **Suspense:**
Example: After the battle, the Orks never returned to middle earth. Or did they?
7. **Magic 3:** A series of three related ideas
Example: As we drove home from our trip, I put on my headphones, pushed back my car’s seat, and closed my eyes for a mental slide show of all the memories I would treasure for the rest of my life.
8. **Famous Quote:** Use someone else’s words to enhance your writing.
Example: After everything I had seen, I finally realized the powerful truth in what Doctor Martin Luther King meant when he proclaimed, “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”
9. **Question:**
Example: With all my hard work, I had accomplished something amazing. I won the state competition for band. However, that left me wondering, “Would I have the determination to do it all again next year?”
10. **Imperative Statement:**
Example: Make a commitment to getting in shape. Turn off the television, put down whatever you’re reading, and start living a more healthy life today. You’ll be glad you did!

Other Ways to Conclude:

Future Statement:

Example: I was so surprised that his feelings had been hurt. In the future, I will try to be more sensitive and think about what to say and how it might make others feel.

Reflective Evaluation:

Example: All in all, the marble-eating incident was a helpful learning experience. I will definitely never try that again!

Tribute:

Example: As the moving van pulled away, I realized that Tom was the best friend a boy could ever have. He was there when I needed him and knew when I needed to be alone. I'll never forget him.

How Life Would Be Different: Show how the events in your story changed your life.

Example: If I had been stubborn and refused to go to the special summer program, I would never have learned about astronomy, never have met my new best friend, Joe, and never have left the house all summer! Thanks, Mom!

Recommendation:

Example: After all the wonderful memories and things I learned, I definitely recommend that you join the National Junior Honor Society. You never know when the leadership skills will come in handy!

Do NOT use these conclusions:

- The End -- if it's the last paragraph of the writing, WE KNOW it's the end. You don't need to tell us.
- Well, that's all I have to say. I hope you liked my story.
- In this paper, I have just told you...
- It was only a dream...
- I hope you have enjoyed...
- You have just learned...

Writing Strategies

Adapted from Mary Ellen Ledbetter

1. **Magic 3:** A series of three related ideas

Example:

If I had a ketchup stain on my shirt, or if my hair looked like a mad scientist, or if I had black pepper stuck between my teeth, she would tell me the truth no matter what!

2. **Figurative Language:** Literary devices such as hyperbole, simile, idiom, alliteration, metaphor, personification, and aphorism.

Examples:

Hyperbole: My mom never lets me do anything; I have to study every single day for a million hours, and it makes me want to die!

Simile: The students swarmed around the teacher like ants on a leftover snickers bar.

Idiom: I was looking forward to our fishing trip so much, but when I looked outside, I gloomily realized it was raining cats and dogs.

Alliteration: The picture-perfect room was playful and pleasant.

Metaphor: Sitting at the lunch table with crumbs all over his shirt, apple sauce dripping down his knee, and milk puddles on the seat, the boy was a total pig.

Personification: My history book sat on the table next to my desk, staring at me, begging me to read it, but I decided I would much rather play computer games.

Aphorism: If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got.

3. **Specific Details for Effect:** Show Don't Tell -- Using specific details rather than vague generalizations, the writer creates a clear picture in the reader's mind of the mood, person, place, or thing being described.

Example:

For Thanksgiving, our dining table was transformed into a mile long buffet of roasted golden turkey, steaming white mashed potatoes, and sugary sweet brownies, cakes, and pies.

4. **Anaphora:** Repetition for Effect -- Writers often repeat specially chosen words or phrases to emphasize a point or stress certain ideas for the reader.

Example:

Maybe it's the way the mountains reach the clouds, maybe it's the way the waterfalls dive off every cliff, maybe it's the way everything is peaceful and quiet, or maybe it's all of that combined.

5. Expand the Moment: Instead of speeding past a moment, writers often emphasize it by slowing down time and describing every movement, sensation, and second in detail. This is often used for the climax of a story to show its importance to the reader.

Example:

His face cut through the frigid air as he began the descent, moving through the substance called snow on the vehicle called sled, which propelled itself on what he now knew without doubt to be runners.

Comprehending all of those things as he sped downward, he was free to enjoy the breathless glee that overwhelmed him: the speed, the clear cold air, the total silence, the feeling of balance and excitement and peace. (Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*. Houghton Mifflin, 1993.)

6. Humor: Using amusing (but appropriate) words, phrases, or imagery to make the reader chuckle to him/herself. Humor makes the writing enjoyable for the reader.

Example:

She finally looked my way, and I flashed my charming, adorable, I'm-so-cute smile. She giggled and turned to whisper something to her friend. She was probably telling him how cute I was. That was when my friend leaned over with a grin and gently nudged me, "Hey Romeo, you've got spinach in your teeth."

7. Hyphenated Modifier: A group of hyphenated words that function as an adjective to describe a noun.

Example:

He smiled that I-got-bodies-in-my-freezer kind of smile. (Shusterman, Neal. *Full Tilt*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2003.)

8. Full Circle Ending: Echoing a word, phrase, quote, etc. from the introduction in the conclusion paragraph. This allows the writing to be cohesive and makes the paper feel finished.

Example:

Lead: When I stepped out into the bright sunlight, from the darkness of the movie house, I had only two things on my mind: Paul Newman and a ride home. (Hinton, S.E. *The Outsiders*. Viking Press, 1967.)

Conclusion: I wondered for a long time how to start that theme, how to start writing about something that was important to me. And I finally began like this: When I stepped out into the bright sunlight, from the darkness of the movie house, I had only two things on my mind: Paul Newman and a ride home... (Hinton, S.E. *The Outsiders*. Viking Press, 1967.)

9. Allusion: A reference to someone or something that is known from literature, history, religion, mythology, politics, sports, or some other field most people are familiar with.

Example:

"How does this dress make me look?" my mom asked.

"I think it makes you look 15 years younger," I replied with a huge grin.

She laughed and smiled, "You better be careful, or your nose will grow 15 inches longer!"

-Allusion to *Pinocchio*

Punctuation Pointers

Commas

Commas are used in many ways.

- After introductory words or phrases.
Examples: Yes, I am going to the party tomorrow.
 In the middle of the evening, we watched television.
- When joining two sentences with a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.
Example: The concert was cancelled, so we went to see a movie.
- When making a list or series of more than two items.
Example: Texas, Arizona, and California are all in the Southwest.
- With nouns of direct address.
Example: Mrs. Smith, do you have a pencil I can borrow?
- When inserting an appositive into the sentence.
Example: Mrs. Bush, the wife of President Bush, is visiting today.
- When separating a series of adjectives which modify the same noun.
Example: The hot, dry, blistering wind blew across the desert.
- When inserting non-essential phrases or clauses.
Example: The house, which was painted blue last week, is on the corner of the street.
- To separate quotes from non-quotes in dialogue.
Example: Sarah shouted, "Throw the rope!"
- With dates and addresses -- after the day and after the city.
Examples: October 10, 1492 - Dallas, Texas
- After the salutation of a personal letter and after the closing of any letter.
Examples: Dear Franklin, - Sincerely, Jonas

Apostrophes

Apostrophes are used in two ways.

- Contraction: to show where a letter (or letters) have been left out
Examples: I have = I've - Cannot = Can't
- Possession: to show ownership of a noun
Examples: Rosemary's shoes - Nathan's Tuba

Periods

Periods are used in two ways.

- End mark: to complete a declarative sentence.
Example: Stephen King writes scary books.
- Abbreviation:
Examples: Mister = Mr. - Sullivan Street = Sullivan St.

Semicolons

Semicolons are used to connect two complete thoughts in a compound sentence.

Examples: Deb likes soup; Jason loves sushi.

Colons

Colons are used in two ways.

- Time: Colons are used when marking hours and minutes.

Example: 10:46 PM

- List: They are also used to introduce a list after a complete thought.

Example: I am going to bring all the supplies: the paintbrush, the easel, and the canvas.

Ellipses

Ellipses are used when you want to show the reader that something (an idea or a time period) has been left out, or you want to show partial information.

Example: "I'll see you next year," she called out from the car window ...but that was the last time I ever saw her.

Problems Involving Sentence Fragments, Run-ons, and Comma Splices

- Sentence Fragments: An incomplete thought or a sentence which is missing either the subject or the verb.

Examples: The ladies in the park.

When I jumped into the lake.

Examples now corrected: The ladies in the park watched over their children.

When I jumped into the lake, I noticed the large alligator!

- Run-Ons: Two or more independent clauses are not joined by a semicolon or conjunction.

Example: Henrietta likes soup Jason loves sushi.

Example now corrected: Henrietta likes soup, but Jason loves sushi.

Henrietta likes soup; Jason loves sushi.

- Comma Splices: Putting together two sentences (independent clauses) with only a comma.

Example: Henrietta likes soup, Jason loves sushi.














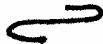







Example now corrected: Henrietta likes soup, but Jason loves sushi.

Henrietta likes soup; Jason loves sushi.

Henrietta likes soup. Jason loves sushi.

Editing Marks & Symbols

FISD Approved Proofreading Symbols

	Delete.	<i>Why should you write?</i>
	Close up space.	<i>It all ows for expression.</i>
	Delete and close up space.	<i>Writing exercises the brain.</i>
	Put back deleted material.	<i>Writing is the most important ^{stet} form of communication.</i>
	Add a letter or word.	<i>Writing helps ^{us} feel.</i>
	Add a space.	<i>Writing brings joy.</i>
	Transpose letters or words.	<i>Writing is painting words with.</i>
	Change a letter or word.	<i>Writing is music through words.</i>
	Add a comma.	<i>Writing begins with thinking [,] planning [,] and dreaming.</i>
	Add a period.	<i>Writing can be fun [.]</i>
	Add an apostrophe.	<i>It's ['] your chance to choose.</i>
	Change to capital letter.	<i>⁼ it can be serious.</i>
	Change to lower case letter.	<i>It can be humorous.</i>
	No new paragraph; run together.	<i><u>It can be gloomy.</u> <u>It can be cheerful.</u></i>
	Add quotation marks.	<i>Teachers say, ["] Writing is awesome! ["]</i>
	Start new paragraph.	<i>"Write!" chirps the teacher. ["] "Please, no!" groans the student.</i>
	Awkward phrasing	<i>Students' difference in writing ^{awk} abilities from the superior, to those who struggle, is a huge problem</i>
	Run-on	<i>Writing is a way to reflect on life ^{RO} and writing is a way to record life.</i>
	Fragment	<i>The miracle of writing ^{frag}</i>
	Word Choice	<i>Authors strive to create writing that has an <u>affect</u> on their audience.</i>
	Tense shift	<i>I dreamed, I ^{ts} plan, I wrote!</i>

Capitalization

1. First word in a sentence or line of poetry.
Example: Last night was fun.
2. The pronoun I, both alone and in contractions.
Example: Did you see what I just did? I'd like to know the answer.
3. Proper nouns and their abbreviations.
Example: Linda; Windsor Road; Austin, Texas; France; Australia; Rocky Mountains
4. Sections of the United States (should have "the" in front).
Example: capitalize: the Northwest; He grew up in the South.

Do not capitalize compass directions.

Example: south on Coit; Go north of the mall.

5. The names of planets, stars, constellations, and galaxies.
Example: Jupiter; Vega; the Milky Way

Do not capitalize sun and moon. Also, do not capitalize earth if the word "the" comes in front of it.

Example: My report was about the earth. She compared Mars with Earth.

6. The names of historical events, periods, and documents.
Example: the Boston Tea Party; the Middle Ages; the Jazz Age; the Constitution
7. The names of groups – such as organizations, businesses, institutions, and government bodies.
Example: the United Way; State Street Bank; Reed College; the House of Representatives
8. The days of the week, the months of the year, civil and religious holidays, and special events. Also, capitalize the abbreviations A.D., B.C., A.M., and P.M.
Example: Sunday, Fourth of July, Rose Bowl Parade, Olympics
9. Do not capitalize the seasons of the year unless they are part of a specific name.
Examples: Will you plant in the spring?
The Spring Festival is here.

11. The names of nationalities, races, and languages.
Example: American; African; English

12. The names of religions and religious references.
Example: Christianity; God; the Bible; Torah; the New Testament

13. The names of courses that are followed by a number.
Example: Art II; Creative Writing I

Note: Except for language courses (English, Spanish, French, etc.) course names without a number such as history, math, science, and reading are not capitalized.

14. Capitalize all other proper nouns.
Example: awards – the Academy Award;
brand names – Dove soap;
buildings and monuments – the Tower of London; the Statue of Liberty;
vehicles – Apollo 17

Research Steps

Step 1: Define your Topic.

Narrow your chosen subject down to a topic that can be thoroughly researched within the assigned time limits of your research paper and/or the available resources.

Narrow your topic: Civil Rights ↓
 Civil Rights Movements ↓
 Civil Rights Movements of the 1960's ↓
 "Freedom Riders," Montgomery Bus Boycott, Martin Luther King, Jr.

Step 2: Prepare a Working Bibliography.

Find all of the sources that might be helpful to your research; create a bibliography card for each.

Step 3: Do some background reading on your topic, and develop a thesis.

- Read one or two general articles on your topic in a magazine, book, or encyclopedia.
- Formulate a specific idea that you can support or prove by research.
- A thesis is the controlling idea of your composition. It reflects your purpose and suggests your attitude towards the subject. Remember your audience.
- A thesis must include a topic and an opinion.

Example:

Topic: F. Scott Fitzgerald's novels as a reflection of the 1920's

Thesis: *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald reflects the corruption of the 1920's.

Step 4: Take Accurate and Workable Notes.

Once you have completed background reading, chosen a topic, and prepared working bibliography/source cards, then begin taking notes on your note cards.

Step 5: Analyze your notes, and prepare a revised thesis (if necessary).

Analyze the information in your notes in order to determine whether you can fully support your thesis. If so, it can now become the thesis for your paper. If the thesis you have is not fully supported by your research, revise it to reflect your findings accurately.

Step 6: Create an outline.

You will use your note cards with quotations and parenthetical documentations to create your outline. Your outline will be detailed to ease the process of writing a rough draft.

Step 7: Write the Rough Draft.

- Now that you have your notes and an outline, use the information to write your paper.
- Your paragraphs should match the organization of your outline.
- Remember to document your sources with parenthetical documentation.
- EVERYTHING that comes off a note card or from a source other than your brain is documented.
- Do NOT plagiarize.

Step 8: Revise and Edit.

- Carefully reread what you have written so that you can find those parts which communicate most effectively as well as those which work poorly or not at all.
- Reorganize if necessary.
- Rewrite what is necessary.

Step 9: Prepare a final copy implementing proper MLA format and documentation.

Step 10: Assemble your composition with the Works Cited page.

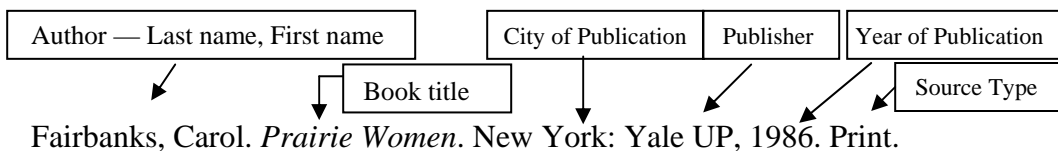
Works Cited

These rules come from an organization called the MLA (Modern Language Association) and they are the rules that you will follow through high school and beyond.

1. The author's name should be written in reverse order: last, first. (However, if there is more than one author, you then list the subsequent authors' names in traditional order: first last.)
2. Title of the book should be italicized but NOT UNDERLINED.
3. Publishing credit should be notated in the following way: Publisher or Publishing Company: City, Year. Print.
4. If a citation continues after the first line, the rest of the lines are indented. (This is called a hanging indentation.)

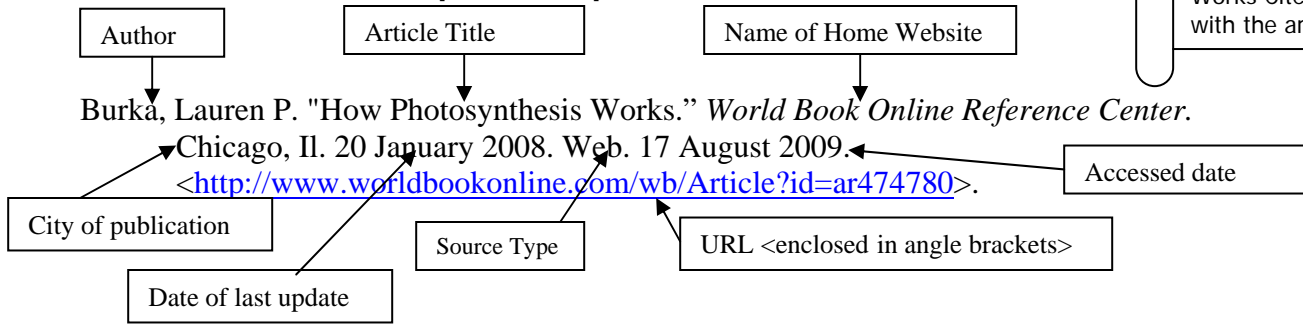
Examples:

Books with one author:

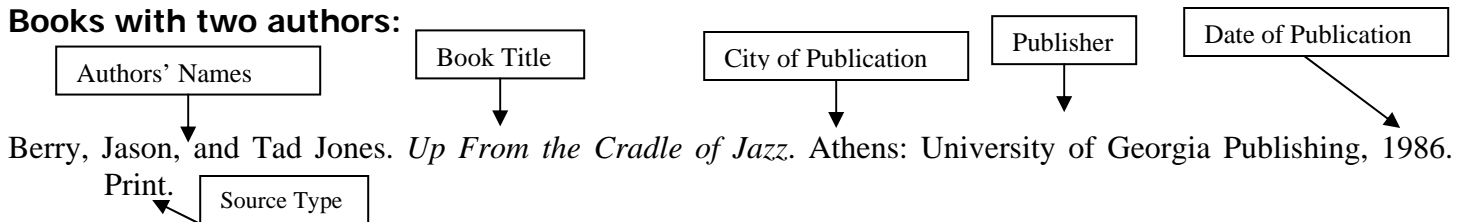


Note: You may not have all of the information asked for in the model. In that case, skip to the next item. Authors are often not given for websites, and the Works Cited entry then begins with the article title.

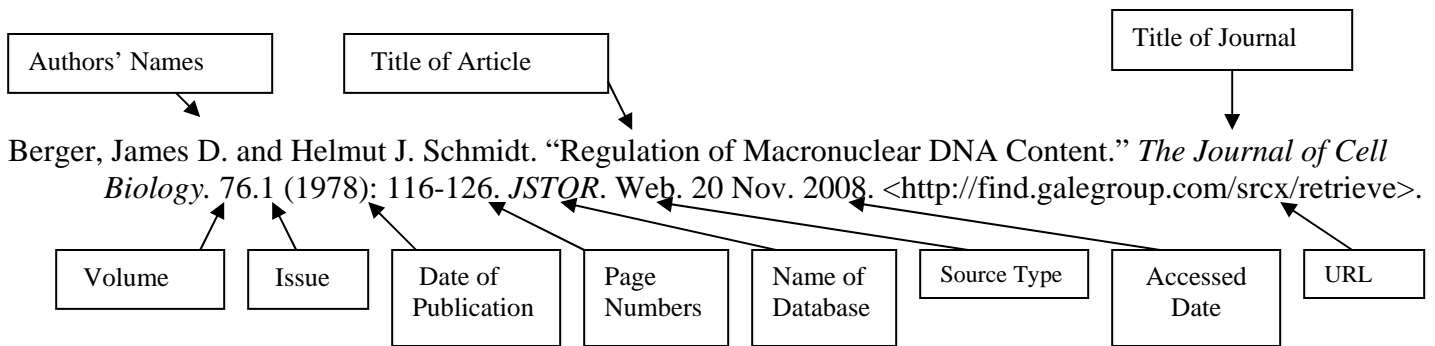
Internet site (with no print companion):



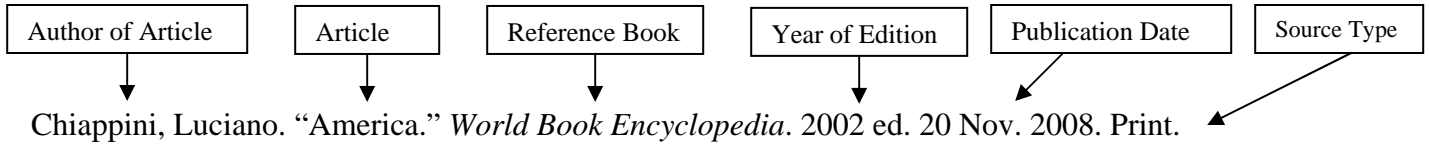
Books with two authors:



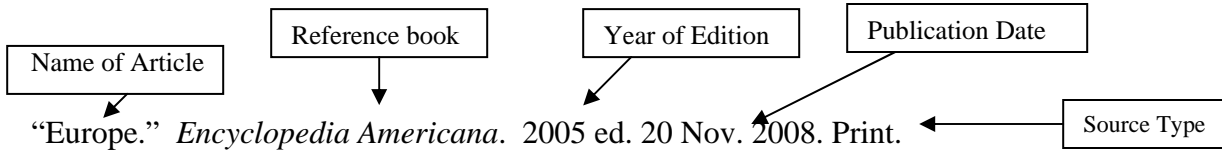
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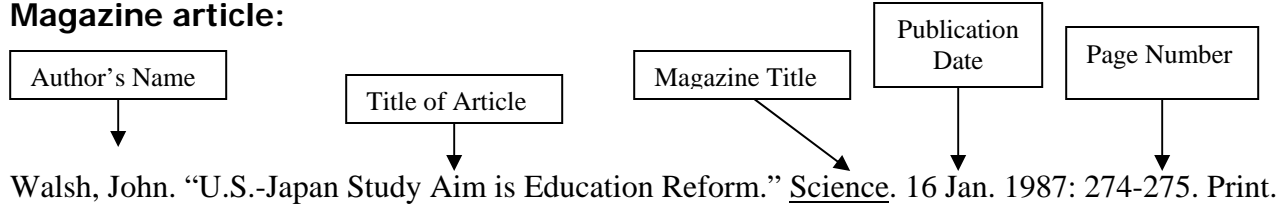
Article from an encyclopedia or other reference book with an author:



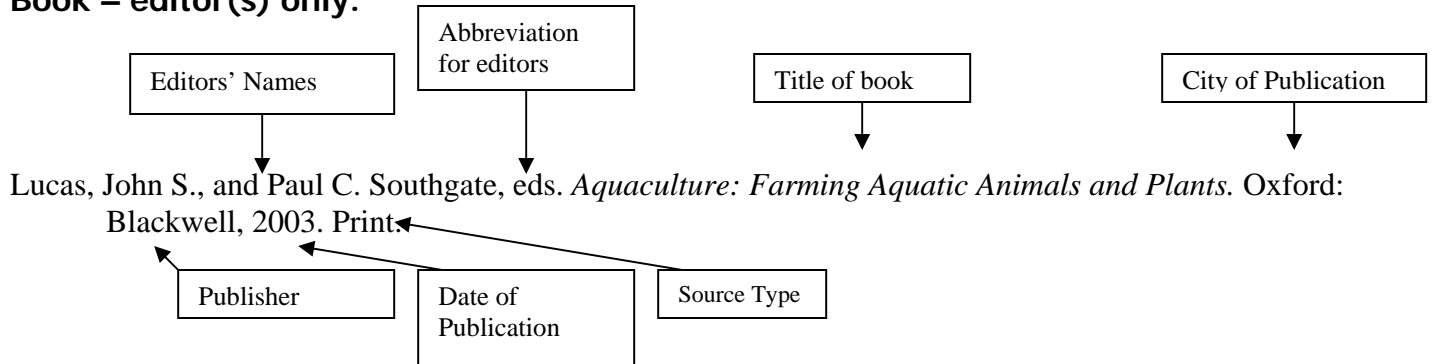
Article from a reference book with no author:



Magazine article:



Book – editor(s) only:



Formatting Works Cited Page:

1. Alphabetize by first word of citation.
2. When using MLA format you **DO NOT** number sources on Works Cited page.
3. The title of your Works Cited page is easy: Works Cited - centered on the page
4. Keep your font 12 pt. Times New Roman – Boring is best!
5. Double space all information.

Example!

Works Cited

Foster, John. *The Power of Words*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1994. Print.

Leggett, Glenn, ed. *Twelve Poets*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1990. Print.

Mack, Maynard. "The World of Hamlet." *Shakespeare: Modern Essays in Criticism*. Ed. Henry F. Dean. Oxford University Press, Inc., 1990. Print.

Plagiarism vs. Paraphrasing

We know you SHOULD know the difference between copying every word from a source and changing the words to say the same thing without copying, but sometimes your work shows you DON'T know the difference.

Here are some helpful hints when paraphrasing:

- Plagiarizing is copying direct information from any source YOU DID NOT WRITE without giving the author credit.
- Paraphrasing is taking the direct information and putting it into your own words.

If the source says:

"Many farmers in Texas and other parts of the United States face serious hardships. The movement of farmers and railroads into the Plains sparked a boom in farm production in the late 1800s. But the supply of crops outpaced the demand. This, combined with problems in the national economy, caused prices to fall. Cotton farmers were particularly vulnerable to the changing national market. In the 1880s, cotton was selling for less than 10 cents a pound. On most farms, it costs 8 cents a pound just to produce the cotton."

The paraphrased paragraph could say:

The farmers in Texas began to have problems because of a big growth in farm production. Because there were too many crops to sell, and a bad US economy, prices fell. Cotton farmers were hurt by this the most. In the 1880s, each pound of cotton sold for less than 10 cents, and it cost the farmers 8 cents to make (Smith 23).

*Notice that in the paraphrased paragraph, you use the same factual information, but you write this information in your own words. Also note that you must cite your source even when you paraphrase.

